

wherein the number and composition of template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide is sufficient to allow the template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end alone to effectively prime nucleic acid synthesis in the nucleic acid amplification reaction.

21. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein all of the primers used in the nucleic acid amplification reaction are template-deficient.

23. (Twice Amended) A method of reducing formation of artifacts in a nucleic acid amplification reaction, the method comprising

conducting a nucleic acid amplification reaction using a template-deficient oligonucleotide as a primer,

wherein the nucleic acid amplification reaction does not involve thermal cycling.

77. (Amended) A method of reducing formation of artifacts in a nucleic acid amplification reaction, the method comprising

conducting a nucleic acid amplification reaction using a template-deficient oligonucleotide as a primer,

wherein the template-deficient oligonucleotide comprises one or more template-deficient nucleotides, wherein the one or more adjacent template-deficient nucleotides are within three nucleotides of the 5' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide,

wherein the number and composition of template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide is sufficient to allow the template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end alone to effectively prime nucleic acid synthesis in the nucleic acid amplification reaction.

78. (Amended) The method of claim 77, wherein the template-deficient nucleotides are abasic nucleotides.

79. (Amended) A method of reducing formation of artifacts in a nucleic acid amplification reaction, the method comprising

conducting a nucleic acid amplification reaction using a template-deficient oligonucleotide as a primer,

wherein the template-deficient oligonucleotide comprises one or more template-deficient nucleotides, wherein the template-deficient nucleotides are abasic nucleotides,

wherein the number and composition of template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide is sufficient to allow the template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end alone to effectively prime nucleic acid synthesis in the nucleic acid amplification reaction.

80. (Amended) A method of reducing formation of artifacts in a nucleic acid amplification reaction, the method comprising

conducting a nucleic acid amplification reaction using a template-deficient oligonucleotide as a primer,

wherein the template-deficient oligonucleotide comprises one or more template-deficient nucleotides, wherein the one or more adjacent template-deficient nucleotides are within three nucleotides of the 5' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide, wherein the template-deficient nucleotides are abasic nucleotides,

wherein the number and composition of template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide is sufficient to allow the template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end alone to effectively prime nucleic acid synthesis in the nucleic acid amplification reaction.

Remarks

Claims 1-19, 21-23, 27, 31-45 and 50-80 are pending. Claims 1-19, 21-23, 27, 31-45, and 77-80 are under examination. Claims 1, 21, 23, and 77-80 have been amended. Claims 50-76 have been withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a non-elected invention. Claims 1, 21, 23, and 77-80 have been amended to more clearly claim what applicants consider to be their invention. Claims 1, 23, 77, 79, and 80 have been amended to recite "conducting a nucleic acid amplification reaction." Support for this amendment can be found in the specification, *inter alia*, at page 19, lines 7-9. Claim 21 has been amended to correct an error relating to its dependency. Further, claims 77 and 80 have been amended to correct a typographical error by reciting "one or more adjacent template-deficient nucleotides." Support for this amendment can